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JANE WELSH CARLYLE: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY

ORA MARY THEOBALD

B. A. Illinois Woman's College, 1917

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN ENGLISH

IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

June 1 1915

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY
SUPERVISION BY Cora Mary Thorbald
ENTITLED Jane Welsh Carlyle: A Biographical
Sketch

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts

Stuart P. Sherman

In Charge of Thesis

Stuart P. Sherman

Head of Department

Recommendation concurred in*

Committee

on

Final Examination*

*Required for doctor's degree but not for master's

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I. THE CASE AGAINST FROUDE

As to some of our great men of letters, we care not if the facts of their life remain hidden forever, but we would not agree to this in the case of Carlyle. The memory of the man lingers with us as long as his books and we desire to know more rather than less of his life. But it were better not to know him at all than to know him from such misrepresented accounts as Froude has given us. Not only did Froude twist the facts in the life of the man whom he would honor, but he violated a sacred trust imposed on him by this greatest writer of nineteenth century England. He accomplished a tremendous and apparently self-imposed task in his four-volume biography of Carlyle which, though popular for a time, has been proved to be labor in vain and will be recorded as an injustice rather than a labor of love. Possibly Froude sinned more through carelessness than through deliberate intention, but the sin is no less great and it will take years to completely efface its influence.

As regards the violation of his trust: Carlyle not only did not give Froude the letters that had passed between him and Miss Welsh for, in fact, he was himself unable to find them; but moreover he left the request to burn them, if ever found. "Let no third party ever read them; let no printing of them or of any part of them, be ever thought of by those who love me."¹ Such an injunction would lead one to question Froude's right to use them; but he did still worse. He warped and twisted their contents merely, as it seems, to prove an interesting and romantic theory he had concerning their authors, and to interest more readers. In many cases Froude's misrepresentation comes about through an exaggeration of certain details and a tendency to deal too seriously with humorous and trifling statements. This partially accounts for the importance he gives

¹

Preface by Norton to Early Letters, I, 11.

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to the Edward Irving episode, to the difference in the social stations of Carlyle and Miss Welsh, and to the objection of Mrs. Welsh to Carlyle as her daughter's suitor. But that he should have represented that Carlyle and his wife never truly loved each other, that Carlyle was a selfish domestic tyrant and Mrs. Carlyle a disappointed woman, broken in health and spirit, was deliberate injustice or willful blindness. Such statements as the following will suffice to show Froude's attitude:

"Could they have left matters thus, it had been better for both of them. Two diamonds do not easily form cup and socket."¹

"The self-denial which he was prepared to make was the devotion of his whole life to the pursuit and setting forth of spiritual truth; throwing aside every meaner ambition. But apostles in St. Paul's opinion were better unwedded!"²

"Carlyle was a knight-errant, on the noblest quest which can animate a man. He was on the right road, though it was a hard one; but the lot of the poor lady who was dragged along at his bridle-rein to be the humble minister of his necessities was scarcely less tragic."³

These extracts show Froude's romantic point of view but they scarcely hint at the mis-statements and unjust accusations with which he filled his pages in support of his theory.

Froude asserts that Carlyle was blind to his wife's loneliness and suffering; that the first year's residence at Craigenputtock broke Mrs. Carlyle's health, the second finished the deed and marked the beginning of the bitter end; that their life in London was full of domestic turmoil; that Carlyle's friendship for Lady Ashburton further estranged the pair; and that, after his wife's death, Carlyle spent his years in bitter repentance for his blindness and negligence. What a sad record, if it were true! How different the picture that we obtain from the account of friends and from the personal letters of the two. His letters, written to people of almost every class, show Carlyle to have

¹ Froude, I, 147.

² Ibid., I, 232

³ Ibid., II, 237.

been a man sincere, kindly, sympathetic and helpful. Emerson, Caroline Fox, David Masson, and a host of other friends bear witness to the happiness of his home life and to the confidential, sympathetic relations with his wife.

The necessity of a satisfactory life-history of these two people is evident. The materials for such a task are now ready and the result would be greeted with enthusiasm by a world of readers. There have been many efforts to prove the case against Froude and to set the matter right. Richard Garnett in his biography of Carlyle, published 1887, recognized Froude's ill-judgment and made a feeble protest, but like many others he lacked either the time or the patience to accomplish the whole task. He himself states that he did not have access to the letters which might have revealed the truth. But apparently feeling called upon to write the book, he passed judgment upon the problem, a judgment condemned by his own acknowledged lack of evidence.

In 1888 Charles Eliot Norton produced the first incriminating evidence against Froude by publishing two volumes of Carlyle's letters (1826-36) which gave valuable information concerning the early married life of the Carlyles, a period which Froude rather neglected, possibly because he could find so little in it to support his theory. "Carlyle's Reminiscences", edited by Froude in 1881, were republished by Norton. This new edition revealed the carelessness of Froude as an editor: Norton found it necessary to make as many as one hundred and thirty corrections in the first five pages of Froude's edition, and these mistakes were not exceptional.

In 1898 David Wilson gave a more complete expression to the charge against Froude in his book on "Mr. Froude and Carlyle". This was a severe arraignment of the Biographer who preferred fiction and romantic theory to fact. In 1903 appeared another condemnation in the "Nemesis of Froude" which was the rejoinder of Sir James Crichton-Browne M. D. and Alexander Carlyle to "My Rela-

tions with Carlyle", which they charged Froude with having written entirely from memory with no access to the proper materials.

The controversy had then reached a climax and more primary evidence was produced in the form of six volumes of letters. In 1903 the two volumes of "New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle" were edited by Alexander Carlyle with a valuable Introduction by Sir James Crichton-Browne. The following year (1904) Alexander Carlyle edited the two volumes of "New Letters of Thomas Carlyle" as a continuation of Norton's publication of the early letters. Finally in 1909 appeared the two volumes of the "Love Letters of Jane Welsh and Thomas Carlyle". Only the heat of the controversy and the absolute injustice done to the two can give the necessary justification for publishing this beautiful and intimate correspondence.

Strangely enough in the same year (1909) a book appeared which takes the extreme opposite stand from Froude's judgment of the situation. Robert S. Craig's "The Making of Carlyle" is unscholarly, inconsistent and harsh in its attitude to "the Lady" as the author calls Jane Carlyle. The reason for his attitude is not clear, but Craig's account reflects discredit on his hero rather than otherwise. He would have us to understand that the worst thing from which Mrs. Carlyle suffered was loneliness. She appears to have married Carlyle merely to discredit Mrs. Montagu; she married for fame, but proudly stood by the bargain, although she continued to look down on her peasant husband and to sorrow in secret for the "master of her heart".

"Mrs. Carlyle always seems to be saying, 'Oh! yes, my husband is the noblest of men, a great genius and a kind, industrious husband; but hush! a peasant while I - well, I was not born to this'."¹

¹ R. S. Craig, The Making of Carlyle, 441.

But even all these publications were not sufficient to stamp out the calumny and a sterner blow was necessary. David Wilson performed this task in 1913. Because of his desire to omit the noxious controversy from the biography of Carlyle on which he was working he wrote the little book, "The Truth about Carlyle" as "an exposure of the fundamental fiction still current". Sir James Crichton-Browne wrote of this book in the Introduction, "It is deplorable that any such exposition should be necessary to-day. I had hoped that the lie was killed in 1903, but, it seems, it was only scotched, and is still wriggling about, envenoming whom it may".

William Allingham's "Diary", lately published, contains this comment: "Carlyle's 'Life'. Melancholy Book. F. has manipulated the materials cunningly."

Thus stands the final judgment against Froude. England's great prophet-teacher will be vindicated only when a full and comprehensive biography appears that shall completely offset Froude's detailed but unreliable account. Only thus will the injury be atoned for in the minds of the future generations. It is almost equally essential that the same be done for Mrs. Carlyle, that both sides of the problem may be fully and clearly recounted; that this charming, vivacious, high-spirited and talented Scotch-woman may be revealed in her true light and as one worthy of her place by the side of the great-souled Scotch Seer.

Only the salient facts can here be presented of a life that was characterized not by events but by character-developing episodes. These episodes show how the eager, bright-eyed, spirited child became in turn the gay, arch, sparkling, confident young girl, the charming, thoughtful, and sympathetic wife, and finally the mature woman, saddened by suffering, but tender, sympathetic, and with the "bit smile" which still retained the sparkle of an undaunted spirit and a hint of the old fire.

II. LIFE TO TIME OF MARRIAGE 1801-1825

Jane Baillie Welsh was born July 14, 1801, at Haddington. She was the only child of Dr. and Mrs. Welsh, people of respectable family and in moderate circumstances. She was a graceful, pretty child, full of life and possessed of a fiery temper. Her training was a compromise between the fond but conventional ideas of her mother and the desire of her father to give her a more solid foundation in learning than the time demanded of girls. Her own willful determination turned the scale; she went to the village school and was allowed to "learn Latin like a boy" and to indulge her fondness for books. Under the tutorage of Edward Irving she progressed rapidly in her studies, showing early promise of intellectual ability as well as an inherited talent for verse-making. Her passion for her father was the most formative element in her development. His death in her eighteenth year, the earliest and deepest sorrow of her life, had a lasting effect and may have been the beginning of her ill-health. She seldom spoke of him in after life, even to her husband. One of her earliest tributes to Carlyle was that he reminded her of her father:-

"I had never heard the language of talent and genius but from my Father's lips; I had thought that I should never hear it more. You spoke like him; your eloquence awoke in my soul the slumbering admirations and ambitions that His first kindled there."¹

Her love for her mother was no less abiding than was her love for her father, but a similarity of nature and a diversity of training and interests prevented the same mutual understanding and sympathy that had existed between the father and his daughter.

After the father's death in 1819, Jane continued to live with her mother at Haddington. There were many social advantages and much visiting, for

¹ Love Letters, I, November 11, 1822.

Mrs. Welsh was fond of company and frequently had a house-ful of guests. This was not exactly pleasing to her daughter, to whom the afternoon teas, the many callers, and constant influx of relatives was a "weariness of the flesh". Naturally frail in body, the strain of social life was wearing and dispiriting; hence she preferred to spend her time with her books and with the few chosen friends whom she admired. Her love of admiration and her genuine interest in people not purely of the butterfly type prevented any thought of entirely renouncing society; but it wearied her and she generally suffered sad consequences after a round of pleasure. In a letter to Carlyle, dated February 21, 1826, she writes: "The Doctor will probably tell you of my 'weaver shuttle' expedition into Edinburgh; and probably too, thro' his doctorial skill, predict the consequence of it. As was to be expected, I have never had a day to do well in since, but have for the most part lain in bed, considerably more dead than alive."

These frequent and capricious journeys and entertainments caused her to exclaim after one rather worse than usual, - "From flitting, then, good Lord, deliver us!" The constant stream of guests in which her mother delighted frequently aroused Jane's wrathful indignation, while some of her characteristic outbursts after such events are almost sufficient to convince us that the solitude of Craigenputtock was not unwelcome. July 21, 1823, she writes to Carlyle from Templand, the home of her grandfather:-

"I hoped to have a little time to myself on my return hither; but in this very moderate expectation I am disappointed: I have found the house full of company. There is my uncle from Liverpool, his wife, the most horrid woman on the face of the earth, and five such children in addition to all that were here before. What with the Mother's scolding, and the children's squalling, and my Uncle's declaiming, and my Grandfather's fidgetting, I am half demented; and if no immediate alteration for the better takes place in my condition, you may expect to hear of me being drowned in the Nith or hanged in my garters. In vain I seek refuge in my own apartments; uproar is in every part of the house; and I am no sooner a-missing than the cry of 'Cousin Pen! come down! come down!'

reminds me I may not be my own mistress here. 'Good Lord, deliver me'! I am sore afflicted."

Despite these many aunts and uncles, who looked on Miss Welsh as a "blue-stockings" and therefore as proud and uncongenial, she was fond of her friends and enjoyed society when not "inflicted upon her". She was a vivacious, charming, graceful and witty hostess and with many wooers to testify to her popularity. To most of these she was indifferent or mockingly superior; to others, not so indifferent. That she once "passionately" loved her tutor Edward Irving, cannot be doubted when we learn that she did not withhold her ardent admiration from a half score of others; there were the Artillery Boy, George Rennie, the Farmer's son at Closeburn, the Steamboat Colonel, the artist Benjamin B, Dr. Fyffe, the boy Dugald G., the "stammering Englishman", her second cousin at Leeds, Captain James Baillie the Lancer, and doubtless others. The Artillery Boy was nine-year-old Jeannie's first love, who left her sad when his Regiment was moved to other quarters; Edward Irving, the Haddington schoolmaster in 1811 may have returned the admiration of his ten-year-old pupil, but at any rate he "moved on" to Kirkaldy the next year and there met Miss Isabella Martin to whom, in due time, he was formally engaged; Jane's next "love" was George Rennie who, according to her own statement, became her fiancé. After his departure for the continent in 1822 to study Art, he too proved "faithless"; in after years they met again, she forgave him and nursed him in his last illness. Carlyle called this the most "serious looking" of her love affairs. Even after her friendship with Carlyle had reached the plane of intimacy, there was the "handsome, fascinating Colonel of the Guards, who held an umbrella over her for four-and-twenty hours and with whom, "had I been at all comfortable, I should assuredly have fallen in love." Carlyle was acquainted too with the prosaic lawyer, a disappointed suitor who, with threats

of drowning himself, hindered Jane's studies; and also with the Tragic-comic affair of Dugald G., which episode is related in detail in Jane's letter of August 11, 1824. These "affairs" prevent us from considering the Irving friendship in the serious light in which Froude has treated it. Whatever her attitude to him, she was heart-free in 1821 when Irving introduced Carlyle to the family circle at Haddington. November 11, 1822, she wrote to Carlyle:

"When you saw me for the first time I was wretched beyond description: grief at the loss of the only being I ever loved with my whole soul had weakened my body and mind; distraction of various kinds had relaxed my habits of industry; I had no counsellor that could direct me; the pole-star of my life was lost, and the world looked a dreary blank. Without plan, hope or aim I had lived two years when my good Angel sent you hither".

That Edward Irving was, instead of being her lover, her "good Angel" is most probable. Aside from her confession to Carlyle that she "once loved" Irving "passionately" we have little evidence that she regarded him as other than a good friend or even continued to esteem him very highly. On the other hand, there is much to prove that she even ceased to admire him, and it was the genuine bond of friendship between Carlyle and Irving that kept up her relationship with him through so many years. Carlyle frequently visited Irving in his London home and wrote interesting accounts to Jane Welsh of the "Orator's" work and his home life. She and Carlyle at one time contemplated a three month's visit to Irving's London home, and she looked forward with much pleasure to meeting him and Isabella. Irving himself indefinitely postponed the visit and incurred Miss Welsh's disfavor by his negligence of their friendship. Her final conclusion was: "What an idiot I was ever to think that man so estimable! But I am done with his Preachership now and forever". Carlyle in a letter of October 5, 1824, gives an amusing account of Irving's home life with his "dear Isabella" and his infant son; he throws an interesting sidelight on Irving's character which doubtless corroborated Miss Welsh's opinion of him.

"The Orator is busy writing and bathing, persuading himself that he is scaling the very pinnacles of Christian sentiment, which in truth with him are little more than the very pinnacles of human vanity rising thru an atmosphere of great native warmth and generosity. We have many and long confabulations. I find him much as he was before, and I suppose will always be; overspread with secret affectations, secret to himself, but kindly and friendly and speculative and discursive as ever. You will have much to tolerate and much that will amuse you, when you see him. It would do your heart good to look at him in the character of dry-nurse to his first-born Edward! It is a feeble shapeless thing, as all children of six weeks are; yet Isabella and her Spouse could not be more attentive to the infant Lama, were they high Priestess and Priest of Thibet. The waking and the sleeping and all the operations of 'him'(as they emphatically name it) form a most important item in the general weal. 'Isabella', said he, 'I think I would wash him with warm water tonight!' 'Yes, Dear', said the compliant Isabella; Kitty smirked in secret; and I made bold to dissent totally from the suggestion; declaring that in my view this was the wife's concern alone, and that were I in her place I would wash him with oil-of-vitriol, if I pleased, and take no one's counsel on it. O, that you saw the giant with his sallow visage, and sable matted fleece of hair, carrying the little pepper-box of a creature, folded in his monstrous palms, along the beach; tick-ticking to it, and dandling it, and every time it stirs an eye-lid, 'grinning horrible a ghastly smile', heedless of the crowds of petrified spectators, that turn round in long trains gazing in silent terror at the fatherly Leviathan! you would laugh for twelve months after, every time you thought of it. And yet it is very wrong to laugh if one could help it; Nature is very lovely, pity she should ever be absurd. On the whole I am pleased with Irving; and hope to love him and admire him and laugh at him as long as I live." ¹

Mrs. Montagu wrote, May 30, 1825, to Carlyle that "If Miss Welsh were to pass one week with me, she might be satisfied that to be Irving's wife, would be entire and unmixed misery: They are not the least fitted to each other." This was an unnecessary but true statement of the facts. That Miss Martin, a daughter of the manse with a strictly orthodox training was more fitted to be his wife is quite to the point and there is no hint that Irving ever came to regret his choice. On the contrary, Mrs. Oliphant, Irving's competent and trustworthy biographer, gives us a picture of an entirely happy and contented couple who loved and honored each other to the end. She pays this tribute to Mrs. Irving's character:--

"She stood by her husband bravely through every vicissitude of life; was so thorough a companion to him, that he confided to her in detail, all the

¹ Love Letters, II, 15-16.

thoughts which occupied him, as will be seen in after letters; received his entire trust and confidence, piously laid him in his grave, brought up his children, and lived for half of her life a widow indeed, in the exercise of all womanly and christian virtues".¹

Froude has done injustice to all parties concerned in this episode. That Edward Irving should have attempted to break the contract with Miss Martin which was of seven or eight years standing and only less sacred than the marriage contract is incompatible with his consequent happy married life and his steady, unswerving friendship with Carlyle. Even from his letters we can scarcely believe that he ever had any more affection for Miss Welsh than for her mother. If, on the other hand, Froude was right in his statement that "Mrs. Carlyle's character was profoundly affected by this early disappointment, and cannot be understood without a knowledge of it"; if "Carlyle himself, though acquainted generally with the circumstances, never realized completely the intensity of the feeling which had been crushed;"² there is nothing in the letters that passed between Jane Welsh and Carlyle to prove the fact of disappointment and crushed feelings, and there is much to disprove it. Alexander Carlyle, in the Appendix to the Love Letters, has treated this episode fully enough to discredit the fallacy which served only to foster Froude's impression that Carlyle and his wife did not love each other. The delusion of a wrecked home life has been believed by the reading public for a quarter of a century and injustice thereby done to two noble characters. The purity and depth of their love cannot be more beautifully told nor the happiness of their married life more safely augured than from the facts revealed in the Love Letters which, as the editor says, "tell the 'old, old story' as it has never been told before; they prove that there was in the heart of the writers a deep and abiding love for each other; that each was in a sense the complement of the other and an indispensability; that 'love and friendship encircled their kindred souls', and that each was to the other not only the best but the only real helpmate

¹ Life of Edward Irving, I, 178.

² Froude, I, 125.

that could have been chosen from the whole circle of their acquaintances." Carlyle's own words are the best:

"It would be little less than impious to renounce this heavenly feeling that unites us. Has not a kind Providence created us for one another? Have we not found each other? and might not both of us go round the Planet seeking vainly for a heart we could love so well."

It were not amiss to speak here of the beauty and worth of these letters. As Froude judged, some of them are "too sacred for publication", and it is almost a crime to peer into their contents, yet the greater injustice was done when Froude broke his trust and misrepresented them. The greater virtue now were to publish every possible bit of information that will reveal the truth. Now that the evil has been done, the greater wrong would be to conceal or destroy the most valuable source of evidence. And such the Love Letters may be judged. It is unnecessary and impossible to attempt a more beautiful account of the courtship. The original story, as told by two of the most interesting and versatile letter-writers of their century, cannot be out-rivaled and were no other personal accounts of their life left than these two volumes of letters, the world would be infinitely better and richer for the legacy.

Because these letters are now available, the account of the courtship need occupy here but little space. Their's might almost have been called a correspondence courtship for visits between them were rare and even Carlyle's guidance of Miss Welsh's studies was through the medium of their letters.

Thomas Carlyle was first introduced to Jane Welsh by Edward Irving in June, 1821, and he leaves us the following account of that first visit:

"The visit lasted three or four days, and included Gilbert Burns and other figures, besides the one fair figure most of all important to me. We were often in her mother's house; sat talking with the two for hours almost every evening. The beautiful, bright and earnest young lady was intent on literature as the highest aim in life, and felt imprisoned in the dull element which yielded her no commerce in that kind, and would not even yield her books to read. I obtained permission to send at least books from Edinburgh. Book-parcels naturally

included bits of writing to and from, and thus an acquaintance and correspondence was begun which had hardly any interruption, and no break at all while life lasted."¹

From the early note of admiration and importune longing which crept into Carlyle's letters, for him at least, this was to be no mere literary friendship. From the ardor with which he wrote, we are rather led to believe that Carlyle with his characteristic determination set himself immediately to woo and wed the charming Jane Welsh. What her impression was can possibly best be judged from her letters to other friends, though the lines in which she compared him to her father, reveal the influence of his mind and spirit over hers. From a letter of March 31st, 1823, to a confidential friend, Miss Stodart, are taken these words:

"Often at the end of the week my spirits and my industry begin to flag; but then comes one of Mr. Carlyle's brilliant letters, that inspires me with new resolution, and brightens all my hopes and prospects with the golden hues of his own imagination. He is a very Phoenix of a friend."

Their friendship sprang from a mutual interest in their studies and a corresponding congeniality of spirit. Their mutual interests and indifference to the commonplace transcended any imagined difference of training or station in life. The friendship progressed with rapid strides. January 14, 1822, Carlyle wrote, "Alles für Rühm und Ihr". Her reply, written in accordance with her mother's wishes is a rebuff; she would be nothing more than his constant and devoted friend; she disapproved of the visit he purposed to make to Haddington. But Carlyle, undaunted, made the visit and with it came the first crisis in this friendship of eight months' standing. Mrs. Welsh was merely civil and her daughter coldly formal. Fortunately the correspondence was continued; Carlyle "can scarcely find one word to say after that unfortunate visit" and trembles "through fear that some unguarded word may dissolve their connection forever".

His direction of her studies marked an important epoch in her intellectual development. She continued her Latin, read history, and French and German

¹ Reminiscences, P. 137.

authors. Carlyle frequently sent her his manuscripts and translations and original poems passed between them; they even contemplated writing a novel together and some of her translations from the German were to have had an important place in one of his principal publications. Had this friendship resulted in no greater intimacy, it served to develop Miss Welsh's mental capacities, broaden her outlook, and provide her with the intellectual food which she craved, but was unable to secure in her own narrow sphere. Froude intimates that Carlyle shattered her orthodox beliefs and left her without a spiritual security of faith. But there is nothing to show that her religious training was ever so orthodox as was Carlyle's, whereas she developed early an independent type of mind. In fact, though Carlyle molded and directed her intellectual or even spiritual development, there is every assurance that her own individuality of thought never ceased to assert itself. But rather her sparkling wit and strong personality made her later one of the most charming friends and hostesses in the literary circle of London.

Within a year's time these two friends were on terms of intimacy and Miss Welsh had made Carlyle her confidante. But in September of 1823 she again rebuked his too ardent wooing by the words that "she loves him, loves him, but will never be his wife". He replied that she had put their relations "on the very footing" where he wished them to be. "You love me as a sister, and will not wed; I love you in all possible senses, and will not wed any more than you." Then came the prospect of spending a whole summer together in London as guests of Edward Irving and his wife, in anticipation of which Miss Welsh was "almost out of her wits with joy". But this hope was disappointed. However in February of 1824 they met in Edinburgh, which meeting resulted in a quarrel. Miss Welsh apologized by writing that she "believes the Devil tempted her to be absurd and ill-humored at the outset." Carlyle having reestablished himself in the good graces of Mrs. Welsh was again welcomed to Haddington in May of 1824 apparently

as her daughter's avowed lover.

It would appear that Froude has placed too much stress on the difference in the social rank of these two and on Miss Welsh's assumed superiority to Carlyle's uncouth ways. Friends have asserted that Carlyle, rather than being awkward, had the grace of strength and the gentle bearing that accompanies a noble soul; moreover his university training gave him the right to mingle in better society even than the narrow circle of Haddington permitted. In fact, Carlyle's non-society ways sprang mainly from his indifference to society and his contempt for "gigmanity", while Jane Welsh, with her impatience and lack of congeniality in such a sphere, shared this contempt for "gigmanity". Likewise too much attention has doubtless been paid to Mrs. Welsh's opposition to Carlyle. That she frequently did object is evident. She guarded their correspondence and frequently checked the rapidly growing intimacy by peremptory commands and prohibitions. The two lovers even resorted to the device of writing phrases in colloquial German which Mrs. Welsh was unable to read. But it is probable that such difficulties most frequently arose from misunderstandings between mother and daughter who were by nature none too congenial. Jane Welsh's Scotch temper frequently clashed with her mother's whims and caprices and the mother's displeasure often took the form of ill-favored criticism of Carlyle. Carlyle bore it quite patiently and generously sought to reconcile the two, but he even exclaimed after one of the most serious of these episodes: "my deliberate opinion is that she will never like me". In her letter of October 25, 1825, Jane wrote:

"Since you departed this life, I have been the forlornest, most dispirited of creatures. 'What can be worse than to dwell here, driven out from bliss', amid wind and whist and ill-humor? Is there any livelier image of Hell? O Time, bring the roses as fast as you can; for the 'winter of our discontent' is ill to bear! It was on the day after your departure that the storm, which has been brewing in my mother's mind for many weeks, broke forth in copious eloquence. Oh, mercy! what cruel, unreasonable things she said! But nothing distressed me so much as her bitter reflexions against you, whom she accused of having 'bewitched

and poisoned my mind'. She was unjust, I told her; my connection with so wise and honourable a man could be attended with no ill consequences; and, anyway, such language now was out of time,— particularly since it was with her knowledge and consent, that I had come to look upon you as my partner for life. She sulked for four-and-twenty hours, and then wrote me a long epistle, wherein she demonstrated (not by geometrical reasoning) that I was utterly lost to all sense of duty; and took much bootless pains to explain the inconsistency of her conduct towards you.

"I am not afraid that my happiness will be wrecked upon this rock; nor is my mother either, if the truth be told. I could lay my life this grand objection never entered her head till she was sitting with the pen in her hand, hunting after an excuse for so much caprice".¹

Such an account suffices to show the nature of the difficulty. That Mrs. Welsh did willingly acquiesce in the marriage and came to love and trust Carlyle as her own son reveals the minor importance of such disagreements.

Another unpleasant delusion concerning the relations of these three is that regarding the matter of property and income. At his death, Dr. Welsh had left his estate (£200 to £300 a year) to his daughter. She was unwilling to marry and leave her mother alone with no settled income. During a visit to Haddington in April of 1825 Carlyle had advised Miss Welsh to make over to her mother the life-rent of Craigenputtock and the ownership of the Haddington House. He left with this understanding, knowing that they would both then be equally poor and the marriage be longer delayed. A provisional settlement had been prepared by Miss Welsh's lawyer in 1824, and in July, 1825, she made her will. By this instrument she left Craigenputtock in fee simple to Carlyle with additional disposition of the home in Haddington and the life rent of Craigenputtock to her mother. She presented the deed to her mother with this note: "I promised Mr. Carlyle, when he was last here, that before we met again, he should be delivered from the thought of loving an Heiress, a thought which is actually painful to his proud and generous nature".² At the same time she wrote to Carlyle:

¹ Love Letters, II.

² New Letters and Memorials, I, 3.

"My money matters are all arranged; and now I am as poor as yourself. Do you like me the worse that I am poor? Not you indeed! And for me, I would give thousands a-year instead of hundreds to buy the conviction of being loved for myself alone. Mr. Donaldson (lawyer) has seen my will too, with your name written in it in great letters. No matter! Why should I be ashamed of showing an affection which I am not ashamed to feel?"

Thus was settled the alleged disparity in rank; so in the following September Jane Welsh visited the Carlyles at Mainhill, not as a condescending Princess nor to see "with her own eyes the realities of life on a Scotch farm".¹ She had spent much time in her childhood on the farm, had been carefully trained to a frugal life by her parents, and, being penniless, came to Mainhill as an equal of the Carlyle family to visit the mother of her future husband. She remained there from the second to the nineteenth of September, "happy, as was very evident, and making happy".²

But previous to this visit an incident occurred which threatened to mar its pleasure. This was the ill-timed letter of Mrs. Montagu and Jane's enforced confession that she "once loved" Irving "passionately". Her depth of passion for her former tutor has been discredited and facts previous to this letter show that the episode did not precipitate relations between the two. Carlyle, who was a personal friend of Mrs. Montagu, had asked her to write to Miss Welsh to whom he had described the lady thus:

"A stately matron with a quick intellect and a taste for exciting sentiments; which two qualities by dint of much management in a longish life she has elaborated into the materials of a showy, tasteful, clear-sighted, rigid, and I fancy, cold manner of existence, intended rather for itself and for being looked at, than for being used to any useful purpose in the service of others. She loves and admires the Orator (Irving) beyond all others: me she seems to like better than I like her".³

Mrs. Montagu said in a letter to Carlyle, dated May 30, 1825: "In writing to Miss Welsh I had a task of considerable difficulty. 'Her heart is in England, her heart is not here', and I feared to be the means of stirring an old flame". To

¹ Froude I, 276, 313.

² Carlyle's Account of the Visit. New Letters and Memorials, I, 3-8.

³ Love Letters, I, 377-8.

this difficult letter Jane had replied "in luminous English" that her heart was in Annandale. When Mrs. Montagu sent the "two sheets" to Miss Welsh trying to persuade her that she did not know the state of her own heart, the "noble lady" evidently did not know that a virtual engagement had existed between the two for some months.¹ Miss Welsh sent the letter to Carlyle, made her confession, and the whole unpleasant affair was dismissed. The complete confidence between the two prevented any serious consequences. Carlyle later characterized "the two sheets" as "some of Mrs. M.'s nonsense".

After many delays the marriage was at length arranged to take place October 25, 1825. The chief difficulty concerned a home and means of livelihood as Carlyle had as yet no settled income from his pen. There was much discussion of the matter and several schemes were hatched and in turn discarded. Miss Welsh frequently teased her lover about his "farming schemes", which joking statements have been taken all too seriously by Froude. Carlyle and Miss Welsh were both anxious that the engagement should not extend through many years and looked forward with eagerness to a home together with arrangements equally satisfactory to Mrs. Welsh. At length Haddington was sold; Mrs. Welsh went to live with her father at Templand, and a house was rented at Comely Bank, Edinburgh. The account of the "funereal preparations", as Froude chose to term them, is amusingly related in the last letters written before the ceremony. Both parties disliked the formalities of such an occasion and were determined to dispense with all unnecessary items. "The Last Speech and Marrying Words of that Unfortunate Young Woman, Jane Baillie Welsh", as Carlyle humorously names them, are quite characteristic.

"Unkind that you are ever to suffer me to be cast down, when it is so easy a thing for you to lift me to the Seventh Heaven! My soul was darker than midnight, when your pen said, 'let there be light', and there was light as at the bidding of the word. And now I am resolved in spirit and even joyful,—

¹Love Letters, II, 84, note.

joyful even in the face of the dreaded ceremony, of starvation, and every possible fate.

"I am going to be really a very meek-tempered wife. Indeed, I am begun to be meek-tempered already. My Aunt tells me she could live forever with me without quarreling, - I am so reasonable and equal in my humour. There is something to gladden your heart withal! And more than this; my Grandfather observed while I was supping my porridge last night, that 'She was really a douce peacable-body, that Pen!' So you perceive, my Good Sir, the fault will be wholly your own, if we do not get on most harmoniously together". ¹

¹ Love Letters, II.

III. COMELY BANK AND CRAIGENPUTTOCK

The life of the Carlyles at Comely Bank was busy, happy, and comparatively serene. Their home was a roomy and comfortable cottage in a quiet and sparsely populated part of the city, unpretentious but furnished with the charm of simple, refined taste. It was an economical household; Mrs Carlyle had one maid, frequent supplies came from the Scotsbrig farm, and household expenditures were kept within the £2-per-week limit, as Mrs. Carlyle naïvely relates in her letters. Only one thing seemed to mar the serenity of these first years.

Mrs. Carlyle writes thus:-

"The new book is going on at a regular rate; and I would fain persuade myself that his health and spirits are at the same regular rate improving: more contented he certainly is since he applied himself to this task; for he was not born to be anything but miserable in idleness. Oh that he were indeed well, well beside me, and occupied as he ought! How plain and clear would life then lie before us! I verily believe there would not be such a happy pair of people on the face of the whole earth!"¹

The same letter charmingly describes the simple, peaceful tenor of their lives.

"Indeed we had a most quiet and even happy life here: within doors all is warm, is swept and garnished; and without the country is no longer winter-like, but beginning to be gay and green. Many pleasant people come to see us, and such of our visitors as are not pleasant people, have at least the good effect of enhancing to us the pleasure of being alone. Alone we never weary; if I have not Jean's² enviable gift of talking, I am at least among the best listeners in the Kingdom. And my Husband has always something interesting and instructive to say. Then we have Books to read; all sorts of them from Scott's Bible down to Novells; and I have sewing needles and purse needles, and all conceivable implements for lady's work. There is a Piano too, for 'soothing the savage breast'."

Carlyle wrote to his family an equally interesting account of these days.

"My good little wife is the best of all wives. I declare I am astonished at the affection she bears me, and the patience with which she listens to my doleful forebodings and turns them all into gay hopes. In everything

¹ New Letters and Memorials, I, 19.

² Carlyle's youngest sister.

great and little she gives me entirely my own way; asking, as it seems, nothing more whatever of her destiny, but that in any way she could make me happy. Good little girl! Sometimes too we are very happy; in our trim quiet house, sitting by our own tea, with a good book in my hand, and a clear fire on the hearth, I feel as if all would be well, and far better than my best expectations."¹

Jane was evidently more than fulfilling the expectation of her Penfillan grandfather.

February 3, 1827, Carlyle wrote:-

"Directly after breakfast, the "Good-wife" and the Doctor² evacuate this apartment, and retire upstairs to the drawing room, a little place all fitted up like a lady's work-box, where a 'spunk of fire' is lit for the forenoon, and I meanwhile sit scribbling and meditating, and wrestling with the powers of Dulness, till one or two o'clock, when I sally forth into the city, or towards the sea-shore, taking care only to be home for the important purpose of consuming my mutton chop at four. After dinner, we all read learned languages till coffee (which we now take at night instead of tea), and so on till bedtime, only that Jane often sews; and the Doctor goes up to the celestial globe studying the fixed stars, through an upshoved window, and generally comes down to his porridge about ten with a nose dropping at the extremity, and as red as blood-pudding. Thus pass our days in our trim little cottage, far from all the uproar, and putrescence(material and spiritual)of the reeky town, the sound of which we hear not, and only see over the knowe the reflection of its gas lights against the dusky sky, and bless ourselves that we have neither part nor lot in the matter."³

Though they might ignore the "reeky town", there were many visitors from Edinburgh who sought their pleasant company.

"We have immense quantities of visitors here", says Carlyle, "all calling down upon us with one accord the most unexampled blessings of Heaven: some of them are agreeable persons, and with these we purpose keeping up some little quiet intercourse; the rest are of the butterfly tribe, and these we dismiss with fair speeches to flutter forth into some more congenial climate."⁴

Again he writes in this strain:

"Of society we might have abundance. People come on foot, on horseback, and even in wheeled carriages to see us; most of whom Jane receives upstairs, and gladly dispatches with assurances that the weather is good, bad, or indifferent, and hints that their friendship passes the love of women. We receive invitations to dinner also; but Jane has a circular, or rather two circulars, one for those she values, and one for those she does not value; and one or other of these she sends in excuse. Thus we give no dinners and take none; and by

¹ Letters of Carlyle, Norton Ed., I, 10-11.

² Dr. John Carlyle.

³ Letters of Carlyle, I, 27-28.

⁴ Ibid., I, 17.

the blessing of Heaven design to persist in this course so long as we shall see it to be best. Only to some three or four chosen people we give notice that on Wednesday nights, we shall always be at home, and glad if they will call and talk for two hours with no other entertainment but a cordial welcome and a cup of innocent tea. Few Wednesday evenings, accordingly, when some decent soul or other does not step in, and take his place among us; and here we converse, and really I think enjoy ourselves far more than I have witnessed among beef-eating and wine-bibing convention which I have been trysted with attending".¹

These words (in part misquoted and misinterpreted by Froude), in spite of the humorous exaggerations to which Carlyle was prone, at least show that Mrs. Carlyle's "lonely and disappointed existence" did not begin at Comely Bank.

Among the quantities of visitors who sought the friendship of the Carlyles, Lord Jeffrey, editor of the Edinburgh Review and influential as a literary critic, soon found his way into their quiet circle; continuing from that time, for many years, a personal friend and admirer of Carlyle and his "gleg" little wife. Dr. John Carlyle remained with them for a prolonged visit. Toward the end of their stay at Comely Bank Carlyle's mother and younger sister spent four happy weeks with them, enjoying for the first time the sights of Edinburgh and endearing themselves in the heart of Jane Carlyle.

But as a literary income is uncertain and fluctuating and resources were low, in 1827 the project of removing to Craigenputtock was seriously considered. Both Carlyle and his wife were favorably inclined to the scheme. Carlyle visited the moorland farm and settled the matter in conjunction with his brother Alexander, and the latter was left in charge to put the place in readiness for the new occupants. Some articles for the Review, on which Carlyle was working, delayed the removal to Craigenputtock until Whitsunday, 1828. Anticipations of the peaceful life on the moors were accountable in part to Carlyle's restlessness and Mrs. Carlyle's ill-health, made worse by a hasty summons to Templand where the illness and death of her favorite Aunt, Jane Welsh, brought a shock and grief which threatened to shatter her nerves.

¹ Letters of Carlyle, I, 28-29.

After a brief visit to the home of the Jeffreys at Craigcrook, the removal to Craigenputtock was accomplished in the spring of 1828. Then began what Froude calls the "long and dismal exile in that bleak desert" which "crushed the life" of this bright creature, Jane Carlyle. Scarcely could two accounts diverge more widely than Froude's story and the Craigenputtock letters of Carlyle and his wife. Even the place itself can scarcely be termed "the dreariest spot in all the British dominions". This was the paternal ancestral home of the Welsh family and here Jane had spent a part of her own early childhood. An eye witness contradicts Froude with this description of the place:

"There are hundreds of farms and cottages of shepherds in Galloway alone much more isolated and dreary than Craigenputtock. ***** The season accounts for the impression, to be sure, which the visitor may carry away from Craigenputtock. From March until October it is an ideal moorland residence. There is health on the wings of the wind. The rolling hills around by day, the stars in the canopy of the sky overhead by night, make it a select haunt for the lover of the mountainous aspects of nature. In August the blooming of the heather robes the mountains in purple and in mid-winter the snow on the summits of Merrick and the Cairns mores in the west lends an Alpine charm to the otherwise bleak solitude. There were few neighbors in Carlyle's time for communication with Corsack was not then opened; in winter the resources of the mind are necessary there. For three months at a time, Carlyle observed, not a solitary stranger approached their door. It is a haunt of solitude, but there is nothing killing about it, especially for young people who were society within themselves and had little unoccupied time to be miserable."¹

This is at least a fair statement of the facts. The Carlyles did not do the hard work of the farm; they had a tenant farmer and Alexander Carlyle was overseer; Mrs. Carlyle had plenty of help within doors. They lived the life of the common gentry or rather of literary people in any country home and suited their occupations to their own desires and needs. Mrs. Carlyle's servants were experienced, but she managed her own household, and believing as she did in the dignity of labor, she mastered the details of kitchen, garden

¹ The Carlyle Country, J. M. Sloan, 242.

and farm-yard. Yet she had time to spend many happy hours at her books. Her own accounts of life at Craigenputtock are scarcely discouraging and when absent she "was wearying to be back". As late as June, 1832, she wrote thus to a friend:-

"It is the stillest, solitariest place that it ever entered upon your imagination to conceive; where one has the strangest shadowy existence, nothing actual in it but the food we eat, the bed one sleeps on, and (praised be Heaven!) the fine air one breathes; the rest is all a dream of the absent and distant, of things past and to come".¹

"For my part," she continues, "I am very content. I have everything here my heart desires, that I could have anywhere else, except society; and even that deprivation is not to be considered wholly an evil: if people we like and take pleasure in do not come about us here in London², it is thankfully to be remembered that here 'the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest'. If the knocker makes no sound for weeks together, it is so much the better for my nerves. My husband is as good company as reasonable mortal could desire. Every fair morning we ride on horseback for an hour before breakfast. Then we eat such a surprising breakfast of home-baked bread and eggs, etc., etc., as might incite any one that had breakfasted so long in London to write a pastoral. Then Carlyle takes to his writing, while I like Eve, 'studious of household good', inspect my house, my garden, my live stock, gather flowers for my drawing room, and lapfuls of eggs; and finally betake myself also to writing or reading, or writing or mending, or whatever work seems fittest."³

In pleasant weather there were frequent rides to Templand, to Scotsbrig and Dumfries. Templand, where Mrs. Welsh lived with her father, was fifteen miles from Craigenputtock. Carlyle and his wife often made the trip on horseback and remained there over night, returning early the next morning. Thus Mrs. Carlyle kept in closer touch with her mother than was ever possible in after years. The solitude seemed less of a solitude with the loved ones so near, all within half-a-day's journey. Even Carlyle's father ventured the distance, which was his longest

¹ New Letters and Memorials, I, 41-42.

² Reference to winter of 1831-2 spent in London.

³ New Letters and Memorials, I, 43-44

journey from home.

Emerson came to Craigenputtock on that memorable visit which was characterized as the brightest event in the year. The Jeffreys came twice, the first time staying three days when the Advocate brought "wife and child and lap-dog and maid with him." Before the next visit which was planned on short notice, Mrs. Carlyle galloped away to Dumfries for supplies and back again, having sent word to Carlyle who was absent from home, and had everything in cheerful order for the distinguished guests. Nor did she deign to apologize for her simple fare and plain way of living but rather, proud of her ability as hostess, did not even hesitate to tell Jeffrey that she turned the cakes for breakfast with her own hands. His surprise was met with the reply, "Yes, and you can turn it over in your mind, too."

The winter of 1831-2 was spent in London where old friendships with the Irvings and the Jeffreys were renewed and new ones formed including John Stuart Mill and the Austins. The visit was marred by the death of Carlyle's father of whom the son wrote the tribute "would that I could write my books as he built his houses."

Carlyle's purpose in going to London had been to find a market for Sartor Resartus and, that failing, they returned to their home on the moors where they soon slipped back into the quiet, orderly way of living. The four winter months of 1833 were spent in Edinburgh, but they departed with no desire to return. They had been led there by the need of books and the dread of the moorland winter but the cold "gigmanity" of their former home was more disagreeable than the bleak moors. Vigorous health of body accompanying the simple life made Craigenputtock almost a haven. Doubtless their contentment with this retreat was increased somewhat by a mutual dislike of the cold conventions of the social life found in the cities. After the winter in London she wrote:-

"If I have an antipathy for any class of people, it is for fine ladies. I almost match my Husband's detestation of partridge-shooting gentlemen. Woe to the fine lady who should find herself set down at Craigenputtock for the first time in her life, left alone with her own thoughts, no 'fancy bazaar' in the same kingdom with her, no place of amusement within a day's journey; the very church, her last imaginable resource, seven miles off. I can fancy with what horror she would look on the ridge of mountains that seemed to enclose her from all earthly bliss! with what despair in her accents she would enquire if there was not even a 'charity sale' within reach."¹

This lack of entertainment apparently did not weigh on the spirits of the Carlyles. Nor did they feel entirely shut off from the world without. One of the brightest memories of those years was due to the letters and packages that passed between the couple in Scotland and the great master of German literature, Goethe. His death in 1832 brought genuine sorrow to the Carlyles. This was the period of Carlyle's deepest interest in German literature and thought and some of his best work in that field was written at Craigenputtock. Carlyle and his wife read both German and Italian books together. They felt, through their letters with Goethe in German, with Emerson in America, and with Dr. Carlyle in Italy, that in their "peat-bog castle" centered interests that connected them with the whole world.

Least of all, can the life at Craigenputtock be blamed for Mrs. Carlyle's chronic weakness, and even the severe illness in the winter of 1830 did not leave such serious results as Froude maintained. The six years in this home were Mrs. Carlyle's best and brightest as far as health is concerned. Sir James Crichton-Browne M. D. writes:

"Mrs. Carlyle benefited immensely by the sojourn at Craigenputtock, not as regards her weak chest, for she never had one, but as regards her nervous system. It was a perfect sanatorium for a case like hers — mild, and yet bracing, with pure air and water, abundant sunshine and new milk, and affording repose and freedom from excitement. Never, at any later period of her life, was she as well and vigorous as when 'cooped' up in that 'desert' as in her exaggerative way she called it".²

¹ New Letters and Memorials, I, 43.

² Ibid., Introduction, I, 41.

Frequent despondency cast a gray cloud over life in these years as is evident in letters of the period. These remarks led to the prejudiced statements of Froude as to the permanent injury done to her health at Craigenputtock. Had Froude not been indifferent or actually refused to go to the proper authorities for information, his account would not have aroused such a storm of protest. One must seek deeper than the surface for the causes of her shattered nerves and the ruined health of later years. A close study of the letters of Jane Carlyle written before her marriage reveal the fact that her trouble was a nervous disorder which had developed early in life. In childhood, her love of books prevented the free out-door activities of the modern romping child. Her high-strung nerves suffered a shock in the death of her father from which she never recovered. The irregular flitting social life which her mother enjoyed, but served to irritate her unsettled nerves. The quiet, regular life and the wholesome air of the Craigenputtock moors soothed her nerves as near to repose as they had ever been. This is made more evident by the fact that her days there were unmarred by the long periods of distressing headache, which only returned with the confusion of visiting and the noisy life of London.

Froude's more serious mis-statements concerning the childlessness of this home are gross injustice. The evidence of authorities whom Froude disdained to consult, has completely refuted his harsh statement that the Carlyles never desired any children and laughed to scorn such foolish fondness as that of the Irvings for their children. The beautiful affection of the Carlyle family at Scotsbrig and the traditional love of children of the average Scotchman; the soothing, almost maternal attitude of Mrs. Carlyle toward her husband and towards the many sufferers to whom she tenderly ministered, might alone dispel the gray cast with which would-be friends have colored the lives of these two, were there no more direct evidence on the subject.¹ Suffice it to say that Froude's harsh

¹ David Wilson, "Mr. Froude and Carlyle".

Sir James Crichton-Browne, "Nemesis of Froude", 63-4.

statements are discredited and Mrs. Ireland's effusive sympathy is wasted. I quote two extracts here and these only because Froude used them but failed entirely to see their real significance. The first is from a short poem dated "The Desert 1834".

"God speed thee, pretty Bird! May thy small nest
With little ones all in good time be blest!
I love thee much!
For well thou managest that life of thine,
While I! — O ask not what I do with mine!
Would it were such!"¹

The following passage appeared in Carlyle's "Reminiscences":

"Her little bit of a first chair, its wee, wee arms, etc., visible to me in the closet at this moment, is still here and always was; I have looked at it hundreds of times, from of old with many thoughts. No daughter or son of hers was to sit there; so it had been appointed us, my Darling. I have no Book thousandth part so beautiful as Thou; but these were our only 'Children', — and in a true sense they were verily ours; and will perhaps live sometime in the world, after we are both gone;—and be of no damage to the poor brute chaos of a world, let us hope! The Will of the Supreme shall be accomplished. Amen!"²

In spite of the disadvantages and loneliness of Craigenputtock we are satisfied to regard those years in the light of Carlyle's own pleasant memories. In his "Reminiscences" he characterizes those years as a rustic-coated idyll, saying that "perhaps these were our happiest days."

"Strange how she made the desert blossom for herself and me there; what a fairy palace she had made of that wild moorland home of the poor man! In my life I have seen no human intelligence that so genuinely pervaded every fibre of the human existence it belonged to. From the baking of a loaf, or the darning of a stocking, up to comporting herself in the brightest scenes or most intricate emergencies, all was insight, veracity, graceful success, fidelity to the insight of the fact given."³

However a continued existence at Craigenputtock was not to be thought of or even hoped for. After six years of residence there, the lack of books, the call of friends, the drabness of the moors, and Carlyle's eternal restlessness of spirit, all combined to turn their attention toward London as a place of brighter prospects. Years after, the decision was thus recorded in Carlyle's

¹ Love Letters, II, Appendix, 358-9.

² Reminiscences, 456.

³ Ibid., 388-9.

Reminiscences:

"She was very hearty for London, when I spoke of it, though till then her voice on the subject had never been heard. 'Burn our ships!' she gaily said, one day — 'dismantle our house; carry all our furniture with us'."¹

Carlyle preceded his wife to London and she followed a few weeks later with the household goods. At length the house at Cheyne Row No. 5 was leased and became their permanent home. Carlyle's reminiscence of this momentous change runs thus:

"Her arrival I best of all remember. Ah me! she was clear for this poor house (which she gradually, as poverty a little withdrew after long years' pushing, has made so beautiful and comfortable) in preference to all my other samples: and here we spent our two-and-thirty years of hard battle against fate; hard but not quite unvictorious, when she left me as in her care of heaven's fire. My noble one! I say deliberately her part in the stern battle, and except myself none knows how stern, was brighter and braver than my own. Thanks darling, for your shining words and acts, which were continual in my eyes, and in no other mortal's. Worthless, I was your divinity, wrapt in your perpetual love of me and pride in me in defiance of all men and things. Oh, was it not beautiful, all this that I have lost forever!"²

¹ Reminiscences, 405-6

² Ibid., 403.

IV. LIFE IN LONDON

Scarcely ever has the home life of genius been so completely and so charmingly depicted for the reader as has that of the Carlyles in London. With a remarkable gift of humor and of dramatizing the ordinary events of domestic routine, Mrs. Carlyle narrated the most trivial details in her letters in a way that never failed of interest for her friends. Whatever else her life may have been, it was not monotonous; she was constantly creating diversion for herself and others. Her attitude toward life is well expressed in a letter to a Miss Hunter: "Come and wind me up again, as you have often done before when I was quite run down, so that, from being a mere senseless piece of lumber, I began to tick and tell people what o'clock it was".¹ This helps to account for the success of her tea parties and for the popularity of the home at Cheyne Row No. 5. A friend relates one episode which reveals her impatience, equal to that of Carlyle's, with tiresome and dull conversation. When the evening threatened to be a failure through commonplace conversation, Mrs. Carlyle threw her cup of tea into the fire-place by way of diversion. Her little ruse had the desired effect and changed the whole tone of the evening.²

Of Mrs. Carlyle's letters to her friends, the most intimate are those addressed to Mrs. Russell, the wife of Dr. Russell of Thornhill, Scotland. She was Mrs. Carlyle's closest friend and this friendship became the connecting link between Cheyne Row and old friends of the Welsh family in Scotland. Not the least interesting accounts in these letters are the ones dealing with the servant problem. Mrs. Carlyle was without doubt an adept in the art of managing her maids. She pictures most dramatically the two girls who refused to live peacefully together, the maid who brought destruction on herself through drink,

¹ Letters and Memorials, I, 17.

² Living Age, 159:303, "Reminiscences of J. W.C. "

the frequent sounds of cracking china, and the mysterious disappearance of supplies. During her mother's stay in London, Mrs. Carlyle wrote to her husband, who was absent in Scotland: "That we are not neglected by the public, you may infer from the fact that, this very night, Peaswep fetched up four tea-cups on the tray; and when I asked the meaning of the two additional, she enquired, with surprise, 'were there to be no gentlemen'?"¹

Mrs. Carlyle had one maid of whom she wrote thus: "My large beautiful housemaid is like a cow in a flower-garden amongst the curiosities and niceties of a civilized house."² Concerning Anne Cook, a servant whom Carlyle had brought from Scotland, Mrs. Carlyle gave her friend this account:

"Our situation is farther improved by the introduction of Anne Cook into the establishment, instead of the distracted Roman Catholics and distracted Protestants who preceded her. She seems an assiduous, kindly, honest, and thrifty creature; and will learn to do all I want with her quite easily. For the rest, she amuses me every hour of the day with her perfect incomprehension of everything like ceremony. I was helping her to wring a sheet one day, while she had the cut finger, and she told me flatly it was 'clean aboon my fit'. 'I shall get at it by practice', said I; 'far weaker people than I have wrung sheets'. 'Maybe sae', returned she very coolly; 'but I ken-na where ye'll find ony weaker, for a weaklier-like cretur I never saw in a' my life.' Another time, when Carlyle had been off his sleep for a night or two, she came to me at bed-time to ask, 'If Mr. Carlyle bees only uneasy through the nicht, and's ga'an staiveren about the hoose, will ye bid him gae us a cry at five in the morning?'

"We may infer, however, that she is getting more civilization, from the entire change in her ideas respecting the Handsome Italian Count; for, instead of calling him 'a fley (fright)-somebody' any longer, she is of opinion that he is 'a real fine man, and nane that comes can ever be named in a day with him'. Nay, I notice that she puts on a certain net cap with a most peculiar knot of ribbons every time she knows of his coming. The reward of which act is an 'I weesh you good good day' when she lets him out. So much for poor Ann, who, I hope, will continue to flourish in the land."³

The last servant, Jessie, who remained even several months after Mrs. Carlyle's death came from Scotland. Her mother had been a servant with the Carlyles before her marriage. Jessie's relations with the Carlyles are told in

¹ Letters and Memorials, I, 26.

² Ibid., II, 304.

³ Ibid., I, 38.

an interesting sketch of "Mrs. Carlyle and her Housemaid".¹ After engaging the services of this girl, Mrs. Carlyle wrote to her husband from Holm Hill, Scotland, in 1865:

"Jessie is in Thornhill awaiting my orders - the most promising looking servant we have had since her mother. I am greatly pleased with her, and so glad I had faith in breed and engaged her. Many were eager to have her. But she was 'prood to go back to the family!' 'The Family!' where are they?"

The reader of Mrs. Carlyle's letters follows these accounts with interest and is inclined, with the mistress, to draw a sigh of relief when a satisfactory servant is secured and household affairs run smoothly again. In general the servants adored Mrs. Carlyle and were high in their praises of the master of the house, finding the Chelsea home a not unpleasant place in which to live.

Seldom, if ever, were the invasion of carpenters, cleaners and paper-hangers at house-cleaning time and even the advent of bugs related with such humor and dramatic interest. Mrs. Carlyle managed house, servants, neighbors, with cocks and pianos, and even details of her husband's business with an ability and diplomacy little short of genius. Pianos were silenced, the chicken-yard inhabitants banished, and even a sound-proof room made possible for the colossal task of writing a life of Frederick the Great. An impatience of spirit with all disturbances on the part of both Carlyle and his wife must be accounted for by the highly excitable nerves and restless nights of genius. Even from Liverpool Mrs. Carlyle wrote to her husband on July 25, 1845:

"The cat-operas are a fixed thing: they too, it would seem, have their Thursday night. Last night it was Der Freyschütz, or something as devilish, and the performance did not cease till two in the morning; when the cocks took possession of the stage, 'bits of fascination', and carried on the glory till breakfast time. Add to which occasional explosions of bad feeling from the dog, and an incessant braying of carts from early dawn, going to and from the quarry; and through all, the sensation of being pent up in the foot of a boot."²

¹ The Critic, 39:346.

² Letters and Memorials, I, 233.

No uncommon trait of character is shown by the fact that such unpleasant occurrences could the next day be the cause of so much humor to the sufferers. Possibly one may believe that this very element of humor was the saving grace in the lives of two people possessed of such temperaments. Mrs. Carlyle herself remarked that "after all, we fret ourselves too much about little things: much that might be laughed off, if one were well and cheerful as one ought to be, becomes a grave affliction from being too gravely looked at."¹

We learn, too, how far the hindrances to domestic comfort were due to the ups and downs of an author's life. Whatever was a misfortune or inconvenience to Carlyle was the same to his wife, for she was absorbed in his welfare. Friends even remarked that she put him on a pedestal. One wrote that it was impossible to judge what she would do from one minute to the next except in the case of her husband toward whom she showed untiring devotion².

The difficulties connected with the writing of Carlyle's first great success, "The French Revolution", were many. Not the least of these was the episode of the burnt manuscript with the resulting remorse of John Stuart Mill who was responsible for the loss. The disappointment and real seriousness of the loss were concealed as far as possible and Carlyle, comforted and encouraged by his wife, began the task of rewriting the book. Mrs. Carlyle wrote in August of 1835 to Carlyle's sister:

"I do not think that the second version is on the whole inferior to the first; it is a little less vivacious, perhaps, but better thought and put together. One chapter more brings him to the end of his second 'first volume', and then we shall sing a Te Deum and get drunk."³

The rejoicing in the home in Chelsea over the returns from America on the "French Revolution" were not concealed. Mrs. Carlyle had firm belief in

¹ Letters and Memorials, I, 29.

² Living Age, 159:303.

³ Letters and Memorials, I, 20.

her husband's genius and always recounted to him every word of praise that came to her ears. Carlyle wrote in his "Reminiscences" concerning the Cromwell period that "In the whole world I had one complete approver, in that, as in other cases, one, and it was worth all". Not the least expression of his genius, Mrs. Carlyle relates, was his ability to recognize at a distance her trunk among the many others on top of the coach, on the occasion of her return after a visit in Scotland.

The most pleasing bit of appreciation of Carlyle's work came in 1863, in the nature of a gift to Mrs. Carlyle from a friendly reader who wrote as his reason for sending the gift:

"My obligations to your husband are many and unnameably great, and I just wish to acknowledge them. All men will come to acknowledge this, when your husband's power and purpose shall become visible to them.

"If high respect, love, and good wishes could comfort him and you, none living command more or deserve more."¹

Mrs. Carlyle's grateful reply was written on February 11 of 1863 in a characteristic vein.

"I wish, dear sir, you could have seen how your letter brightened up the breakfast time for my husband and me yesterday morning, scattering the misanthropy we are both given to at the beginning of the day, like other nervous people who have 'bad nights'. I wish you could have heard our lyrical recognition of your letter — its 'beautiful modesty', its 'gentleness', and 'genuineness'; above all I wish you could have heard the tone of real feeling in which my husband said, at last, 'I do think, my dear, that is the very nicest little bit of good cheer that has come our way for seven years!' It might have been thought Mr. C. was quite unused to expressions of appreciation from strangers, instead of (as is the fact) receiving such almost every day in the year — except Sundays, when there is no post. But, oh, the difference between that gracious, graceful little act of faith of yours, and the intrusive, impertinent, presumptuous letters my husband is continually receiving, demanding, in return for so much 'admiration', an autograph perhaps! or to read and give an opinion on some long, cramped MS. of the writer's; or to — find a publisher for it even! or to read some idiotic new book of the writer's (that is a very common form of letter from lady admirers) — say a translation from the German(!) and 'write a review of it in one of the quarterlies!' 'It would be a favour never to be forgotten!' I should think so indeed.

¹ Letters and Memorials, II, 250-2.

"Were I to show you the 'tributes of admiration' to Mr. C.'s genius, received through the post during one month, you, who have consideration for the time of a man struggling, as for life, with a gigantic task — you, who, as my husband says, are 'beautifully modest', would feel your hair rise on end at such assaults on a man under pretense of admiring him; and would be enabled perhaps, better than I can express it in words, to imagine the pleasure it must have been to us when an approving reader of my husband's books came softly in, and wrapped his wife in a warm, beautiful shawl, saying simply — 'There! I don't want to interrupt you, but I want to show you my good-will; and that is how I show it'.

"We are both equally gratified, and thank you heartily. When the shawl came, as it did at night, Mr. C. himself wrapped it about me, and walked round me admiring it. And what think you he said? He said, 'I am very glad of that for you, my dear. I think it is the only bit of real good my celebrity ever brought you!'

Yours truly

Jane W. Carlyle."

Carlyle's venture as a Lecturer were good material for his wife's fertile pen and she described his agitation, criticized his actions and recounted his successes in letters of much interest. Before the first series of lectures in 1837, she wrote to her uncle in Liverpool, she was at the time suffering from an attack of the influenza:

"However it be, I am thankful to Heaven that I am the chosen victim in this house, instead of my husband. For, had he been laid up at present, there would have been the very devil to pay. He has two printers on his book, that it may, if possible, be got published in April; and it will hardly be well off his hands, when he is to deliver a course of lectures on German Literature to 'Lords and Gentlemen', and 'honourable women not a few'. You wonder how he is to get through such a thing? So do I, very sincerely. The more as he proposes to speak these lectures extempore, Heaven bless the mark! having, indeed, no leisure to prepare them before the time at which they will be wanted.

"One of his lady-admirers (by the way he is getting a vast number of lady-admirers) was saying the other day that the grand danger to be feared for him was that he should commence with 'Gentlemen and Ladies' instead of 'Ladies and Gentlemen', a transmutation which would ruin him at the very outset. He vows, however, that he will say neither the one thing nor the other, and I believe him very secure on that side. Indeed, I should as soon look to see gold pieces, or penny loaves drop out of his mouth, as to hear from it any such humdrum unrepubli- can-like commonplace. If he finds it necessary to address his audience by any particular designation, it will be thus — 'Men and Women!' or perhaps, in my Penfillan grandfather's style, 'fool-creatures come here for diversion'. On the whole, if his hearers be reasonable, and are content that

there be good sense in the things he says, without requiring that he should furnish them with brains to find it out, I have no doubt but his success will be eminent."¹

Of Carlyle's second great work, the "Life of Cromwell" and the lengthy preparations for it, Caroline Fox makes a short note for November 4, 1842, in her journal: "Mrs. Carlyle speaks of the Cromwell project being a particularly toilsome one, if you may judge from the spluttering he makes; he is trying whether some teeth and a shin-bone dug up from the field of Naseby may not inspire him."

After Carlyle had accomplished one of his great tasks he was usually exhausted and a period of rest was necessary in some other locality, usually Scotland. Caroline Fox recorded on October 30, 1843, that Mrs. Carlyle "says that Carlyle has to take a journey always after writing a book, and then gets so weary with knocking about, that he has to write another book to recover from it."²

During the time that Carlyle was absorbed in his writing Mrs. Carlyle found other occupations than the mere routine of housework. She never lacked companionship, for she unconsciously drew friends to herself and the home in Chelsea became the center for a large circle of interesting people. Among her earliest friends in London were the Sterlings, who, she wrote in 1835, "are a great blessing to us". The following extract is from a letter to Carlyle's sister, Mrs. Aitken, dated August, 1835:

"There are the Sterlings, who, from the master of the house down to the footman, are devoted to me body and soul; it is between us as between 'Beauty and the Beast':-

Speak your wishes, speak your will,
Swift obedience meets you still.

I have only to say 'I should like to see such a thing', or 'be at such a place', and next day a carriage is at the door, or a boat is on the river to take me if I please to the ends of the earth. Through them we have plumped into as pretty an Irish connection as one would wish. Among the rest is a Mr. Dunn, an Irish clergyman, who would be the delight of your mother's heart — a perfect personification of the spirit of Christianity. You may take this fact to judge him by.

1. Letters and Memorials, I, 54.

2. Letters and Journal of Caroline Fox, 185.

that he has refused two bishoprics in the course of his life, for conscience sake. We have also some Italian acquaintances. An Italian Countess Clementine Degli Antoni is the woman to make my husband faithless, if such a one exist so beautiful, so graceful, so melodious, so witty, so everything that is fascinating for the heart of man. I am learning from her to speak Italian, and she finds, she says, that I have a divine talent (divino talent). She is coming to tea this evening, and another Italian exile, Count de Pepoli, and a Danish young lady, 'Singeress to the King of Denmark' and Mr. Sterling and my old lover, George Rennie. 'The victualing' of so many people is here a trifle, or rather a mere affair of the imagination: tea is put down, and tiny biscuits; they sip a few drops of tea, and one or two sugar biscuits 'victuals' a dozen ordinary eaters. So that the thing goes off with small damage to even a long-necked purse. The expenditure is not of one's money but of one's wits and spirits; and that is sometimes so considerable as to leave one too exhausted for sleeping after."¹

The friendship between the Sterlings and the Carlyles was intimate and of long duration and resulted in the "Life of John Sterling" which Carlyle wrote in 1851. Caroline Fox recorded Sterling's opinion of Mrs. Carlyle: "Sterling dwelt with delight on Mrs. Carlyle's character — such hearty sympathy in the background, and such brilliant talent in front; if it were merely 'eternal smart' with her it would be very tiresome, but she is a woman as well as a clever person."² The two felt towards each other more as brother and sister than mere friends and Mrs. Carlyle's playful notes to Sterling were answered in kind.

One June 15, 1835, she wrote to him:

"My dear Sir,— You did kindly to send the little separate note. The least bit 'all to myself', as the children say, was sure to give me a livelier pleasure than any number of sheets in which I had but a secondary interest; for, in spite of the honestest efforts to annihilate my I-ity, or merge it in what the world doubtless considers my better half, I still find myself a self-subsisting, and, alas! self-seeking me. Little Felix, in the 'Wanderjahre', when, in the midst of an animated scene between Wilhelm and Theresa, he pulls Theresa's gown, and calls out, 'Mama Theresa, I too am here!' only speaks out with the charming trustfulness of a little child what I too am perpetually feeling, though too sophisticated to pull people's skirts or exclaim in so many words, 'Mr. Sterling, I too am here!'"³

There were many other friends who frequented the quiet home in Chelsea, some out of admiration for Carlyle and others who came for Mrs. Carlyle's own

¹ Letters and Memorials, I, 20.

² Journal of Caroline Fox, 181.

³ Letters and Memorials, I, 14.

sake. There was Leigh Hunt, a close neighbor of the Carlyles, whose easy going, good-natured and rather shiftless household little appealed to Mrs. Carlyle's thrifty Scotch habits. There were the Austins, John Forster and Charles Dickens, whose private theatricals Mrs. Carlyle had scarcely "penny-a-liner genius" enough to describe; Caroline Fox, whose Journal gives a remarkable picture of the brilliant literary circle in London in the middle of the nineteenth century; David Masson, who increases our acquaintance with this circle in his book, "London in the Forties". Among others were Ruskin, Tennyson, Huxley, Darwin, Tyndall, Froude, Whistler, the portrait painter, and Mazzini, the Italian exile and revolutionist. To the latter Mrs. Carlyle extended her warm sympathy, though his radical views were scarcely appreciated by her more conservative husband. Harriet Martineau, the novelist, was a warm admirer of Carlyle and became equally attached to Mrs. Carlyle.

Geraldine Jewsbury, who figures so largely in Froude's account, was apparently in close friendship with the Chelsea home, but her romantic and unbalanced temperament prevented her ever being Mrs. Carlyle's confidant. Her unconventional and ill-logical actions caused Mrs. Carlyle to frequently lose all patience with her and to dub her "Miss Gooseberry" in a moment of displeasure. During her illness in 1864 Mrs. Carlyle wrote to her husband: "Above all, do not let Geraldine interfere,-- she has the least taste of any woman I know."

Of all the friends of the Carlyles, Lady Harriet Baring, later Lady Ashburton, has received an unusual and perhaps unnecessary share of attention from biographers. She was, in a way, the center or guiding light of the circle in which she moved. She was a woman with a strong mind and brilliant personality and was a social favorite. She drew together the worthiest of the social aristocracy and the leading literary lights of the hour. Her mother, the Duchess of Sandwich, a woman of equally attractive personality, remained to her

death a close friend of the Carlyles, he visiting her once a week whenever in London. Before her marriage Lady Harriet had been drawn to the Carlyles and became their personal friend, which friendship grew more intimate after her marriage. On March 3, 1846, Carlyle wrote:

"Jane gone up to Lady Harriet's tonight; the Lady sends her carriage of an evening for Jane, and they spend a couple of hours talking, reading a thought of German (this I believe is rather rare), more frequently playing chess than doing German. Jane is sent home again between ten and eleven,-- safe by the same conveyance."¹

Again on March 13 he wrote to his mother:

"I go up to visit the Barings about once a week and that is my only outgoing. Jane is going with the Lady Harriet out to the country next week about ten miles off; to stay for a month, going and coming; I too am to go and come occasionally. It is a very pleasant place and will do her good."²

There were frequent visits to the country home of the Ashburtons at Addiscombe on the Grange where, in Carlyle's own words, they "led a strange existence; pleasant enough for the time; and utterly idle."³ Mrs. Carlyle, especially when in poor health, dreaded the dressing and the large dinner parties during such visits, and Carlyle himself enjoyed such occasions even less. Consequently they were given the freedom of the house and permitted to suit their own inclinations. They went once or twice for a month at Christmas time where Mrs. Carlyle made herself popular among the group of merry-makers. One who had known her personally while at the Grange has left some interesting reminiscences of Jane Welsh Carlyle⁴. She is described as being "slight, neat, and erect in figure, animated in expression, with very good eyes and teeth; but with no pretension to beauty." She was clever and amusing in conversation and fond of telling dramatic episodes which, the writer says, she sometimes stretched to too great length. She possessed 'social courage' in an unusual

¹ New Letters of Thomas Carlyle, II, 14.

² Ibid, II, 17.

³ Ibid., II, 12.

⁴ Living Age, 159: 303.

degree and was full of original devices for amusing people, thereby helping to while away many a weary hour. She gave much amusement by relating absurd tales about her husband. Caroline Fox comments on this:

"Mrs. C. plays all manner of tricks on her husband, telling wonderful stories of him in his presence, founded almost solely on her bright imagination; he, poor man, panting for an opportunity to stuff in a negation, but all to no purpose,— having cut him up sufficiently, she would clear the course. They are a very happy pair."¹

Tennyson, too, agreed that "Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle on the whole enjoyed life together, else they would not have chaffed one another so heartily."²

The family relationship between the Carlyles and the Ashburton family is shown in a letter that Mrs. Carlyle wrote to Mrs. Russel in December of 1857:

The Ashburtons have again offered us Addiscombe to rusticate at, while they are in the Highlands. But, in spite of the beauty and magnificence of that place, and all its belongings, I hate being there in the family's absence.***** When Mr. C. gets ill with the heat, he may choose to go up there for a few weeks, and will need me to order his dinners".³

From about this time, Mrs. Carlyle's private Journal contains frequent comments expressing dis-satisfaction with Carlyle's visits to the Ashburton home. These comments Froude has made the basis of a serious charge of estrangement between the two. That Mrs. Carlyle wrote this journal for her own private satisfaction and at a time of actual physical and mental depression is sufficient reason for ignoring it as an authority. No greater injustice could have been done to the memory of Mrs. Carlyle than to drag this journal forth before the eyes of curious readers. Lord Ashburton's own noble demeanour throughout the many years is evident, and until his death he remained a close friend of Carlyle. Mrs. Carlyle made no objections to Carlyle's acceptance of the gift of a riding horse from Lady Ashburton; she even testified with satisfaction to its good effect on her husband's health and spirits. No recorded comment of Carlyle's during

1 Journal, p. 78. March 27, 1840.

2 "Alfred Lord Tennyson", Memoir by His Son, II, 233

3 Letters and Memorials, II, 28.

the years of the friendship remains to show that he regarded his wife's fancied jealousy, if evident at all, as more than a sign of physical depression, to be best treated with calmness and patient forbearance.

The death of Lady Harriet in 1857 brought sorrow to more hearts than the Carlyles'; and Carlyle's testimony to her character but expressed the feeling of many others.

"The most queen-like woman I had ever known or seen. The honour of her constant regard had for ten years back been among my proudest and most valued possessions — lost now; gone — forever gone!"¹

In 1858 Lord Ashburton married again and the second Lady Ashburton became a constant and close friend of both Carlyle and Mrs. Carlyle.

As their friendships and connections with Scotland were severed, the interests of the Carlyles became more closely centered in London. The death of Mrs. Welsh on February 25, 1842, had been the first most serious break in the chain and left Mrs. Carlyle very ill. The following July Carlyle wrote:

"Time alone can alleviate that kind of sorrow. She is left very lonely in this world now; her kindred mostly gone; very few of the people vaguely called 'friends' worth much to her!"²

Mrs. Carlyle expressed in a letter to Mrs. Russell her grateful appreciation of Carlyle's attempt to fill the place of this lost loved one:

"Only think of my husband, too, having given me a little present! he who never attended to such nonsense as birthdays, and who dislikes nothing in the world so much as going into a shop to buy anything, even his own trousers and coats; so that, to the consternation of cockney tailors, I am obliged to go about them. Well, he actually risked himself in a jeweller's shop, and bought me a very nice-smelling bottle! I cannot tell you how ~~wae~~ his little gift made me, as well as glad; it was the first thing of the kind he ever gave to me in his life. In great matters he is always kind and considerate; but these little attentions, which we women attach so much importance to, he was never in the habit of rendering to anyone; his up-bringing and the severe turn of mind he has from nature, had alike, indisposed him towards them. And, now the desire to replace to me the irreplaceable, makes him as good in little things as he used to be in great!"³

¹ Letters and Memorials, II, 76, note.

² New Letters of Carlyle, I, 265.

³ Letters and Memorials, I, 112.

Carlyle spent two months in Templand after Mrs. Welsh's death settling her business affairs. He, at the time, was seriously considering returning to Craigenputtock; but at length Mrs. Welsh's property was sold and connections finally severed with the ancestral home of the Welsh family. Jane herself kept in touch with the old family friends; she never failed to send yearly remembrances to the old servants, as had been the beautiful habit of her mother's lifetime. She felt more closely drawn to Mrs. Russel after the loss of her mother and looked to Thornhill as her Scotland home. A favorite uncle still lived in Liverpool. Her letters and visits with him are full of interest. He possessed many of her own characteristics; a keen strong-minded Scotchman, full of fire and of kindly humor. Jane Carlyle knew, even better than his own family, how to manage him and there are not a few accounts of humorous word passages between the two. Letters to Carlyle from his wife in Liverpool contain the following extracts:

July 27, 1845.— "They are all gone to church and I am here alone, enjoying virtue's (Roman virtue's) own reward. My uncle at the last minute came to me in the room where I had fortified myself(morally), and asked with a certain enthusiasm, 'Are you not going to church?' 'No, I have no thought of it.' 'And why not?' (crescendo). 'Because your minister is a ranting jackass, that cracks the drum of one's ears.' 'Who told you that?'(stamping like my grandfather) 'I do not choose to compromise any one by naming my authority'. 'And what has that to do with going to a place of worship?' 'Nothing whatever; but it has a great deal to do with staying away from a place that is not of worship.' He looked at me over his spectacles for an instant as if doubtful whether to eat me raw or laugh; and 'eventually, thanks God', he chose the latter part. The girls, who came in fear and trembling to pick up my fragments, were astonished to find that I had carried the day. We get on famously, my uncle and I, and by dint of defiance, tempered with kisses, I can manage him better than any one else."

July 30.— "My uncle has enjoyed my visit very much. I wrote to him beforehand on the subject of his 'detestable politics', and we have had no flares up this time. The only one I have witnessed was last night at cards. He and A— were playing at ecarté on a little table in a corner, very silently and amicably to all appearance; the rest of us were sewing or reading. Suddenly the little table flew into the air on the point of my uncle's foot, and a shower of cards fell all over the floor! 'D— these eternal cards!' said he fiercely, as we all stared up at him in astonishment. 'Hang them! Curse them to hell!' They all looked frightened; for me, the suddenness of the thing threw me into a

fit of laughter; in which my uncle himself was the first to join. This morning at breakfast something was said about cards to be taken to Scotland. 'But,' said I, 'I thought they had been all sent last night to hell.' 'Pooh!' said my uncle quite gravely, 'that was only one pack!'¹

Mrs. Carlyle made but few visits to the old home scenes in Scotland after the family were gone. Her accounts of these visits are full of pathos, of mingled tears and smiles. No reader can resist the charm with which she describes her day at Haddington and the surprise of old time friends:— the innkeeper, who said, "since ever I set eyes on you, I have had a notion it was her we used all to look after, when she went up or down"; — the keeper of the churchyard who failed at first to recognize her:

"I don't know you', said he (he was always a very silent man), 'who are you?' 'Guess', I said with my head still turned away. 'Are you the Lady that climbed the Churchyard wall this morning. If it was you that did that then you must be Jeannie Welsh. I thought to myself at the time, it could enter no woman's head but Jeannie Welsh's to get over the wall instead of going in at the gate!'"²

Of her return to Craigenputtock, she wrote to Carlyle, who was in Dresden at the time:

"We have just had one perfectly beautiful day since I came (last Wednesday), and I spent it in an excursion to ——— Craigenputtock! We took some dinner with us, and ate it in the dining-room, with the most ghostly sensations on my part. The tenant was at Dumfries; the wife very civil; the children confiding to a degree. Their father 'had wine', 'whiles took ower muckle'. We called on the Austins and Corsons. Nobody knew me! or could guess at me! Peter said I 'micht hae speaket to him seven year, and he wouldna hae found me oot'. Peter privately stroked my pelisse and asked Mrs. Pringle, 'That'll be real silk I'm thinking?' 'Satin,' said she. 'Aye', said Peter, 'nae doot, nae doot, the best o't.' Rob Austin almost crunched my fingers in his big hand, and that was the only pleasant thing that befell me at my 'ancestral home'. Ach Gott!"³

The Carlyle family in Annandale had also scattered. Carlyle visited his mother almost every year, but after her death on Christmas day, 1853, the trips were less frequent. The beauty of the relationship between mother and

¹ Letters and Memorials, I, 236-7.

² New Letters and Memorials, I, 265-68.

³ Letters and Memorials, II, 128.

and son is known to all readers of Carlyle. The serenity of her spirit even at the time of her death at the advanced age of eighty-three, is well depicted in Mrs. Carlyle's letters, written while she was at Scotsbrig during the last serious illness of the mother. But no more sincere tribute could have been written than that sent in a postscript to Carlyle's letter of September 22, 1837.

"My Dear Mother,— You know the saying 'it is not lost what a friend get'; and in the present case it must comfort you for losing him. Moreover you have others behind, and I have only him, only him in the whole wide world to love me and take care of me, poor little wretch that I am. Not but what numbers of people love me after their fashion far better than I deserve; but then his fashion is so different from all these and seems alone to suit the sort of crochety creature that I am. — Thank you then, for having in the first place been kind enough to produce him into this world, and for having in the second place made him scholar enough to recognize my various excellences, and for having in the last place sent him back to me again to stand by me in this cruel east wind. God bless you all. — If I am not strong enough this winter to go out in the rain I will make a slight drizzle with the shower bath and stand under it with my fine new umbrella.¹ — I will write you a letter all to yourself before long, God willing." ²

The suggestion of ill-health in this early letter became more serious during the years that followed. Constantly recurring attacks of influenza and neuralgia so undermined her health that at last she was driven to the use of opiates for relief. These painful attacks were borne with courage and silence, though afterwards described in letters not without their touch of humor. In February of 1837 she wrote, after a severe siege with influenza:

"Miss Wilson, not having come to close quarters with it, has her mind sufficiently at leisure to make philosophical speculations about its gender! She primly promulgates her opinion that influence is masculine. My husband, for the sake of argument I presume, for I see not what other interest he has in it, protests that influenza is feminine; for me, who have been laid up with it for two weeks and upwards, making lamentations of Jeremiah (not without reason) I am not prejudiced either way, but content myself with sincerely wishing it were neuter."³

Ten years later, in 1847, we learn the suffering was even less endurable. Caroline Fox wrote:

¹ The umbrella had been sent as a gift from Scotsbrig.

² New Letters of Carlyle, I, 91.

³ Letters and Memorials, I, 49.

"Went to Chelsea, where we soon settled into an interesting talk with Mrs. C. She has been very ill, and the doctors gave her opium and tartar for her cough, which induced, not beautiful dreams and visions, but a miserable feeling of turning to marble herself and lying on marble, her hair, her arms, and her whole person petrifying and adhering to the marble slab on which she lay. One night it was a tombstone -- one in Scotland which she well knew. She lay along it with a graver in her hand, carving her own epitaph under another, which she read and knew by heart. It was her mother's. She felt utterly distinct from this prostrate figure, and thought of her with pity and love, looked at different passages of her life, and moralized as on a familiar friend. It was more like madness than anything she has ever experienced. 'After all,' she said, 'I often wonder what right I have to live at all.' She talked sadly of the world's hollowness, and every year deepening her sense of this: half-a-dozen friends is far too magnificent an allowance for any one to calculate on -- she would suggest half-a-one; those you really care about die. She gave a wondrously graphic and ludicrous picture of an insane imagination, cherished by a poor invalid respecting her, etc."

At a later date¹ she wrote quite pathetically that it was a comfort to find that self-destruction was a common feature of "neuralgia" and not merely an expression of individual cowardice.

In 1864 came the accident and strange illness, which demanded every bit of heroism she possessed to endure the severe pain. On returning one evening from a visit she had, in the attempt to get into an omnibus, slipped and fallen on her neuralgic arm and the same time injuring her hip. The severity of the pain and her fortitude during the long period of suffering is told by Carlyle in his *Reminiscences*.² After various attempts at relief, she went to the Scotland where Dr. Russell and his wife nursed her back to near health. The following year was a happy one. Carlyle had completed his life of "Frederick" and a vacation was enjoyed. On September 14 he wrote that "Jane is better than we have seen her for a long time past." The success of Carlyle's last great work and his appointment to the Edinburgh Rectorship were the victories Mrs. Carlyle was permitted to enjoy after their life of struggle for the recog-

¹Letters and Memorials, II, 297.

²Pp. 473-4.

nition of genius. But the rejoicing was destined to be short-lived.

After the inauguration into his duties at Edinburgh, Carlyle had remained for a visit with his family in Annandale when news came to him of Mrs. Carlyle's sudden death. Probably the most reliable account of her sudden taking is that of the servant who was in attendance at Cheyne Row; her account is supplemented by that of the Rector of Chelsea. On Saturday, April 21, 1866, Mrs. Carlyle had gone for a drive after lunch, expecting to return at four for dinner and the guests who were to arrive later. We will follow the rest of the account as given.

"About five, the rector met the empty brougham returning from St. George's Hospital to Cheyne Row. Silvester the coachman related what had happened: - the drive first to Mr. Forster's house at Palace gate; then to the park; Mrs. C. getting out near Queen's gate, and giving her dog Tiny a run as far as the Serpentine; and again putting him out near the Victoria Gate, where he was almost run over by a carriage and his paw slightly hurt; her jumping out almost before he could pull up. lifting the dog into the carriage, and getting in herself; the drive twice around the park and his growing alarm at receiving no order from her; finally, his appeal to a passing lady who at once gave her verdict 'Dead', which was confirmed by another bystander; the drive to St. George's Hospital."

The rest of the details are unnecessary. As Carlyle described it, her death was from the gods as the Romans would have called it and was of the kind she desired. The story of the candles which she asked to be placed at her head as a last loving act of penance to her mother's memory is characteristic. She was buried with her father in the choir of the church at Haddington.

The letters of Carlyle following these last days are beautiful expressions of the deepest sorrow. They reveal bewilderment and intense sadness at the loss of a helpmate and comrade. May the 14th he wrote:

"There is but one topic that lies in all my thoughts day and night, in all forms high and low;- and on that, all mortals but myself are comparatively little concerned (however kindly sympathetic they may feel); and it is better, and more tolerable for me, that I keep that locked in my own sad mind. Universal overturn has tumbled all my little world to ruins for me."¹

¹ New letters of Carlyle, II, 236.

Later in October the following was included in a letter to his brother in America:

"My loss was sudden as if by lightning; but her death was very beautiful, and such as she had always wished: her whole life at that point of time (what with those poor Edinburgh celebrations, and her love to me the object of them) would be felt by her, I know well, to be crowned by perfect victory; and indeed everybody testifies, what was most of all evident to myself, that her last eighteen months, and especially her last two weeks and her last day, were the happiest she had had for many years. Beautiful she was in her utter feebleness and general misery of health; and had such an unconquerable radiancy of cheerfulness, and tranquil clearness, and warmth of affection and generosity to those about her, as are now forever memorable to those that looked on them. To me her loss has been the loss of all that made life valuable; and I do not seem to gather much insensibility to it; but at all hours of the day, and every turn of my procedures in the world, am painfully reminded that she, my bright fellow-pilgrim, has gone from me beyond the stars, and that the rest of my journey must be done wearily alone."¹

If we accept Froude's point of view concerning Carlyle's so-called "remorse" we misjudge both Carlyle and his wife. The beautiful intimacy and comradeship of their last letters give sufficient cause to believe that the marriage had been successful and that in their case, love had grown into something more beautiful than it was even at the first awakening.

¹ New Letters of Carlyle, II, 237-8

V. CONCLUSION

The details of Mrs. Carlyle's life have been placed before the eyes of the reading public in remarkable completeness. It is possible for the biographer to make such a selection as to show a life full of humor, grace and charm, or to give an exact contrast as in Froude's publications of the sad, morose, gloomy letters. But a biased account can scarcely be accepted with justice.

The many ups and downs in the lives of two remarkable characters are all depicted by two of the best letter-writers known to literature. Mrs. Carlyle did not hesitate to give vent to her feelings on all occasions but soothed her ruffled spirits by means of her pen. She was able to make a tragedy or a comedy of commonplace trivialities. Mockery, scorn, ridicule, wit, humor, joy and gladness, pathos and sorrow mingle in these delightful epistles. There is no superficiality of tone: they come from the heart, enhanced by the power of a versatile, keen, many-sided, imaginative mind. It is hard to prime away these charming bits of narrative and descriptive sketches and to give a complete picture of the one who wrote them. We cannot but be conscious of the strength and nobility of the soul which could retain in one small piece of nervous humanity, from which physical pain had snatched the charms of youth, still plenty of the old fire and the 'bit smile'.

Possibly Mr. Nevinson's¹ point of view is the most just and reasonable and most expressive of the ordinary reader's attitude who must take people as he finds them. With the statement that "Froude spoilt one of the finest portraits in biography by overloading the shadows," he proceeds to summarize the problem after it has been dragged through the court of literary biographers.

1 "Books and Personalities", H. W. Nevinson, Pp. 73-90.

Under the significant title, "good friend, for Jesu sake forbear," he says in part (a paraphrase): Mrs. Carlyle's nervous excitability was a part of her brilliant and attractive personality and she suffered as do all sensitive people. Sir James Crichton-Browne diagnosed her as a semi-lunatic; Alexander Carlyle would leave the hasty reader laboring under the impression that she was a virago without any tact or feeling. Both Carlyle and his wife were of brilliant and restless minds; both sensitive; both passionate in love and hatred; both nobly proud and nobly poor; both endowed with vehement eloquence capable of giving vent to their feelings. Yet forty years of married life resulted in the most beautiful intimacy and sympathetic understanding. Few people of genius have such a long and happy domestic career to leave as a judgment to the eyes of posterity.

These two souls, though separated in their last resting-place, were not separated in spirit, for their's was the "indissoluble union" which is the triumphant consummation of a happy marriage. The words on her tombstone at Haddington are more than a memorial or tribute; they are a justly beautiful estimate of her character by the one who knew her best.

"In her bright existence she had more sorrows than are common; but also a soft invincibility, a clearness of discernment, and a noble loyalty of heart, which are rare. For forty years she was the true and ever-loving help-mate of her Husband and by act and word unweariedly forwarded him, as none else could, in all of worthy, that he did or attempted."

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